

8/13/68

Dear Sylvia,

Vince was here a week ago. He told me what I had heard and then forgotten, that you had made a \$100 contribution to the so-called "Thornley Defense Fund" or, as it has also been described, "Fair Play For Thornley". I was busy when Vince left and it slipped my mind until today, when I was sent a clipping from Open City, in which Thornley mentions you in what he intends as a flattering way.

You do what your conscience tells you to, and please do not misinterpret this letter as an effort to deter you. I have heard rumors that both Thornley and Lifton plan suits against me, and I assure you the day cannot come to soon. However, because of the relationship that has existed between us, I feel I must suggest that you think as perhaps you have not about this. It is because of the position you have taken only that I cannot share with you that evidence I have that is relevant.

From the time he was working on the Ramparts "story" on the assassination, when he placed long phone calls to me, I have had the deepest misgivings about Dave. His ~~own~~ own work, when I saw it, magnified these. His abuse of Maggie, well, you know how I feel about this and her. His intrusion on Liebel's behalf, which he lies about, when a debate between Liebel and me had been agreed upon, found me wondering even more about him, really whether he is entirely without psychiatric problems.

What you know about Thornley, I presume, you know from Dave. What Dave knows about Thornley, again I must presume, comes only from the same and not dispassionate source. Why not, in your own interest, begin with the presumption that I cannot share, that everything you have been told about Thornley is true, that Dave has every reason to believe he is really an fine and persecuted guy. Is this enough? Assume, if you'd like, that Garrison, for reasons of his own, is out to "get" Thornley, and again I would not agree. Is this, still, enough? Is it possible that there are things about him, things in his writings, things in his beliefs, you cannot associate yourself with? Is it possible that he has done, said and written things you would find intolerable and could not associate yourself with?

Perhaps, were you to decide this is the case, you might still feel impelled to do what you can to help him, thinking even that it is genuine help. By all means do. I have no desire to intrude into what your conscience demands of you. However, because we are all sometimes motivated by emotions rather than logic and reason, I also suggest that you ask yourself whether in what you have done you were really fighting Garrison (also your right) and not, by intent, affirmatively associating yourself with Thornley.

I do not mince words, so I give you my opinion. I tell you my opinion of Thornley comes from original materials, not conversations with his enemies, none of whom I have ever sought out or spoken to (and I know who some are). He is a liar, a man of violence not a flower boy (and believe me, my documentation here is solid and both original and unpublished) but a woman beater, with political beliefs he misrepresents that in actuality border on fascist (he seems to be an Ayn Rand), and he regularly misrepresents, both himself and others. By now you should be in a position to know that even if what he said in pretended response to my answers to Open City were truthful which they were not, they are not answers. He is and was part of the frame on Oswald, and I have his own repetitive writings, aside from his testimony. He made major and substantive changes in his testimony when he printed it in his "book" (and here he deliberately and grossly

misrepresents what I said of its size, in an unoriginal way indicative of earlier, similar comment, and before his Open City writing had acknowledged this publicly, on radio, and I have the tape and the transcription, so there is no possibility of accidental error), and these are not merely editorial. They include liberties with Jenner's questions and the elimination of subjects in their entirety, up to perhaps two pages at a hunk.

He entirely misrepresents his own relationship with Barbara Reid, who had been his trusted friend and defender. So extreme was her defense of him, that when Clint Bolton was telling me just how much Thornley hated Kennedy she was signalling over his back that it wasn't true. Afterward, when we left, she assured me Bolton could not be right. He trusted Barbara very much, liked her, borrowed from her, and wrote her. A year ago I had one of the letters he wrote, and it is entirely inconsistent with his present statements, yet I do not believe he has seen her since. She was his defender until he left her no alternative.

He and Lifton entirely misrepresent my interest in Thornley, what I did (and didn't) do, what its purpose, what result, etc. I cannot here give you detail, but I give you assurances that everything I did, without exception, was motivated by anything but an effort to frame him. I did not know where he lived, I did not know anyone who did, and I wasn't about to go to a lot of trouble to find out when I could speak to Bolton. You will note that despite his nastiness, Bolton joined in what he represented of what I had suggested. I had nothing at all to do with Kerry's "arrest", and I am not aware on any arrest that didn't follow a grand-jury indictment, with which I had nothing to do, not having been even a witness on it. There is, in fact, nothing that comes to mind of all they have written in Open City and said that has come back to me that is a really honest representation of what I have done and said. From this I take comfort, for it would seem to eliminate the possibility I made accidental error.

I have never so said, but I would not be hard put to present what I think a court would accept as admissible evidence that he might have been a "False Oswald". What might not be admissible is interesting, and it, too, exists.

Well, I've got other things to do, and I do not want to take your time. You need not answer, for I ask nothing of you, no change in your beliefs or actions. I do not claim omniscience or infallibility. I do tell you that from what I know that I have every reason to believe is entirely authentic and beyond any possibility of refutation you may have made for yourself associations that are other than you believe them to be.

Despite the threats, I think it highly unlikely that there will be any kind of suit. Thornley may be able to con Lifton, maybe he'll be able to give one side to a lawyer and deceive him into an action, but unless he is insane he ought know better than do this. And the magnitude of this operation, too, makes one wonder of the resources at Dave and Kerry's disposal. They seem to include, from the boasting, those who would not be interested in what you and I believe to be essential truth.

Sorry I have to be indirect, but I think the need is obvious. Whatever you do, personally, makes no difference to me, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ I don't care how much financial help you elect to give them. While I can think of uses with which we could all agree to which this money could be put (like buying 500 copies of documents in the Archives), I do not think it will be used in any way that will really hurt me. Unless it was already used to finance the dissemination of a rather large crop of lies, misrepresentations and defamations. This seems to have happened. I have ignored it. If this is the way your money was used, I am sorry for you, for I think it is not what you would have wanted.

Sincerely,